



WINTER 2014

City CURRENTS

Where YOUR Taxes GO

The residents of the City of West University Place have an enormous overall tax burden. However, when comparing the taxes paid to other local agencies, including the state and federal government, the services provided by the city are a real value.

"City taxes are really a very good deal," says West University Place Mayor Bob Fry. "The level of services received from city government is just phenomenal. From emergency calls to the police, to sidewalks and trash services, to the clean water you drink – cities like West U are the backbone of every day life."

Yet, many city dwellers find it easier to complain about their share of local taxes – perhaps because local officials are more accessible. In towns like West U, all you have to do is pick up the phone and somebody at city hall is likely to talk to you... the very same day.

In West U, the 2014 city budget directly finances police and fire protection, street and drainage construction and repair, traffic control, parks and recreational facilities, senior citizen services, clean drinking water and wastewater collection. There's also solid waste collection, recycling, street sweeping, building code plan review and inspection, planning and zoning, urban forest management, code enforcement, municipal court, mosquito control and animal control.

A portion of the city budget also goes to retiring bonded indebtedness for capital improvements project that includes almost \$100 million for streets, water, sewer and drainage construction.

Another \$28 million in debt funded construction of new parks and recreation facilities.

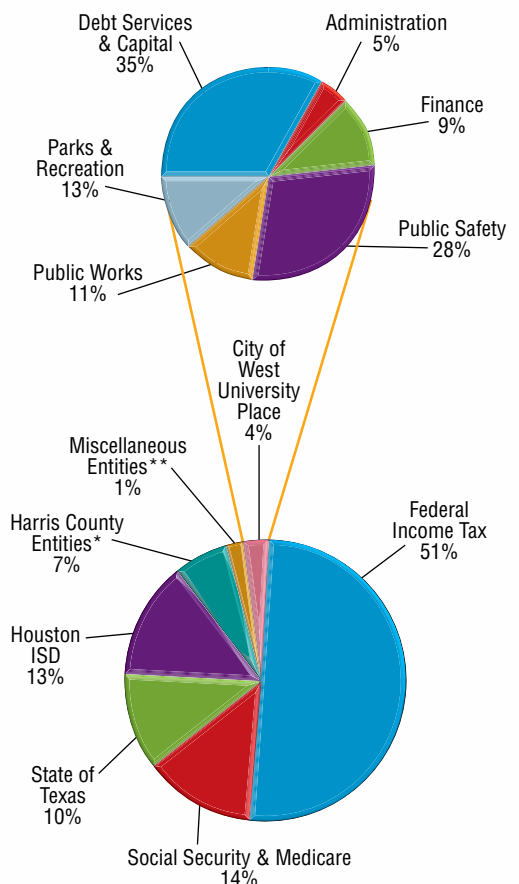
City Manager Michael Ross notes that West U has the third highest property valuations in Harris County – behind the cities of Houston and Pasadena.

"We have approximately \$4.5 billion property valuation, in a two-square mile city," Ross notes. There are just fewer than 15,000 residents in West University Place.

According to CNN Money Magazine, the median family income in West U is \$226,311, and the median home price is \$737,500.

Over the last decade, the residents of West U have paid more than \$100 million in taxes to the five Harris County entities including: Harris County, Harris County Flood Control District, the Harris County Port of Houston Authority, the Harris County Hospital District and the Harris County Department of Education. The combined tax rate for these entities is \$0.636338 per \$100 of property value.

HOUSEHOLD TAX DISTRIBUTION:



West U is also a cash cow for the Houston Independent School District (HISD). HISD trustees recently approved a \$1.6 billion operating budget, based on a 3-cent tax increase. The new HISD tax rate of \$1.1867 per \$100 of property value will raise taxes on a \$200,000 home to about \$1,720 next year. Based on the above-mentioned median home price in West U, that will be approximately

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* Includes Harris County (HC), HC Hospital District, HC Flood Control District, and HC Department of Education
 ** Includes Houston Community College and HC Port of Houston Authority

ASSUMPTIONS: Average home value = \$737,500; Average Adjusted Gross Income & Social Security Wages = \$200,000; Federal Taxable Income = \$172,200

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From the Mayor's Desk



West U residents who share their time, money, expertise and enthusiasm as volunteers for dozens of city and community organizations? Taking time out of a busy schedule is a great way to give back to the city and community that we value so much. It's also a way to gain new and lasting friendships, experiences and opportunities to learn.

Have you already broken that New Year's resolution to cut back on caffeine? Missed several days of your 2014 "daily work out" at the West U Rec Center? Are you finding it hard to stop shopping and start saving because of all those great sales? Why not start the New Year over with a resolution you can keep? Have you considered joining the ranks of the tireless

In the City of West U, there are seven citizen boards and commissions that allow residents to take a leadership role in community activities and decision-making. If you're not ready to jump in the deep end, try attending a few board meetings just to learn about volunteer opportunities in town. If you are interested in city service on a board or commission, please contact City Secretary Thelma Lenz at 713.662.5813.

Residents can help out their city in a lot of other ways. The police department encourages neighbors to get to know each other, and there's no better way than serving as a block captain for Neighborhood Watch. The police department can give you all the information you need to get started.

Many city departments count on volunteers to help deliver first-class city services. Volunteers for the West U Parks and Recreation Department are relied upon to answer phones, provide transportation services, coordinate senior services, and as Good Neighbor Team Volunteers. Students in high school and college can earn much-needed community service hours by serving in the offices of the West U Rec Center and Colonial Park pool. For more information, contact bbakes@westutx.gov.

Bob Ivy

HAVE YOU HEARD OF "MR. WEST UNIVERSITY"?



John has been involved in West University ever since. He was elected to City Council in 1968 and then as Mayor in 1970. He has told me that there were times as Mayor that he worried about how West U would survive, as the income from taxes was not enough to run the City. Thankfully through his guidance, and that of others, we are a thriving Community today.

John's service to West U has continued through the years since he was Mayor:

- Has served on the Bond Funding Committee 1993-1994
- Served on three Charter Review Committees (2000, 2006, 2012)
- Subcommittee for the design and plan for Recreation Center in 2007

There is a slight chance that you do not know John Neighbors, who I call "Mr. West University". John has been involved in West University in various capacities since 1964, when he and his wife Jean moved into our great City. That same year John applied to the City Zoning Board of Adjustment for a variance to add on to their garage. He wanted Jean to have a place to work on her ceramics and art. Being turned down; he appealed to City Council, and won.

- Has served as Co-Chair of the Senior Services Board for 10 years
- Volunteers on the West University Good Neighbor Team. These volunteers deliver items at the Holidays to 143 of our neighbors who are over 85 years of age and still living in their homes.
- Serves as a West U Handyman - volunteers to fix small items for our elderly neighbors.

In addition to serving West U, John was President of the Briar Club in 1999 and is currently President-Elect of West University Rotary (Member since 1996).

One of the things that I enjoy about working with John is that he has the ability to bring people together. When discussing an issue, he finds a way to get the parties to a compromise. He has been a wonderful mentor to me.

It is not too early to think about becoming a candidate for Mayor or City Council (next election is May 2015) and there will be openings for Mayor and four council members. If you are thinking about running for one of these positions, I strongly recommend you meet with John to discuss your questions and concerns.

John's wife, Jean, passed away a year ago. He has recently decided to sell his home in West U and move to a retirement center, but I know we will still see him around West U. I am sure many of you join me in wishing John the very best.

We all wish you and your families a safe and memorable Holiday Season.

Joan Johnson

2014 Trash and Recycling Holiday Schedule Pickup

GOOD FRIDAY	APRIL 18, 2014	FRIDAY
No curbside collection. City offices will be closed.		
• Thursday April 17 routes will be picked up on Wednesday April 16.		
• Friday April 18 routes will be picked up on Thursday April 17.		
MEMORIAL DAY	MAY 26, 2014	MONDAY
No curbside collection. City offices will be closed.		
• Monday May 26 routes will be picked up on Tuesday May 27.		
• Tuesday May 27 routes will be picked up on Wednesday May 28.		
• Normal collection days for Thursday and Friday.		
FOURTH OF JULY	JULY 4, 2014	FRIDAY
No curbside collection		
City offices will be closed.		
• Thursday July 3 routes will be picked up on Wednesday July 2.		
• Friday July 4 routes will be picked up on Thursday July 3.		
LABOR DAY	SEPTEMBER 1, 2014	MONDAY
No curbside collection. City offices will be closed.		
• Monday September 1 routes will be picked up on Tuesday September 2.		
• Tuesday September 2 routes will be picked up on Wednesday September 3.		
• Normal collection days for Thursday and Friday.		
THANKSGIVING	NOVEMBER 27, 2014	THURSDAY
No curbside collection. City offices will be closed.		
• Thursday November 27 routes will be picked up on Wednesday November 26.		
• Normal collection day for Friday November 28.		
CHRISTMAS EVE HOLIDAY	DECEMBER 24, 2014	WEDNESDAY
City offices will be closed.		
• Thursday December 25 routes will be collected on this day.		
CHRISTMAS DAY	DECEMBER 25, 2014	THURSDAY
No curbside collection. City offices will be closed.		
• Thursday December 25 routes will be picked up on Wednesday December 24.		
• Normal collection day on Friday December 26.		

CITY HOLIDAY CLOSURES AND LIMITED SERVICE HOURS

Administration offices are closed the following days during these holidays:

New Year's Day	January 1
Good Friday	April 18
Memorial Day	May 26
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	September 1
Thanksgiving Day	November 27
Day after Thanksgiving	November 28
Christmas Day	December 25
Additional Christmas Holiday	December 26

Where YOUR Taxes GO

Continued from page 1

\$6,340 per home. Due to a 10 percent increase in property values, the new school tax rate will mean about \$230 more than the average paid by HISD taxpayers last year.

The West U city council approved a .032 percent tax rate decrease. The average homeowner will see property taxes increase due to an increase in property values.

The state of Texas and the U.S. federal government also get a huge share of West U residents' overall tax payments each year.

In 2012, West U residents paid \$59 million in state sales taxes, and collections of sales taxes during the first two quarters of 2013 were on pace with that amount. (West U residents also contributed to the \$77.4 billion in state sales taxes that Harris County collected last year.)

The state of Texas further levies dozens of other taxes, including a state franchise tax on business owners, gasoline taxes, and alcohol and tobacco taxes. On January 1, tavern and bar owners were required to start charging a "mixed beverage" sales tax of 8.25 percent on all mixed alcoholic beverages. The new sales

tax is in addition to a gross receipts tax on alcoholic beverages.

The \$188 billion Texas state budget for 2014-2015 has five major areas of expenditures, according to the Legislative Budget Board (LBB). The largest percentage of the state budget is for elementary and secondary education, with 24 percent of the state's overall spending at \$45 billion. According to the LBB, the other top categories of state spending are:

- \$44 billion for Acute Care Services,
- \$20.4 billion for Transportation infrastructure and maintenance,
- \$13.3 billion for Rehabilitation, Disability and Long-term care,
- \$12.6 billion on Higher Education, and
- \$51.2 billion for "other" state services and programs

A resident of West U pays an estimated \$35,682 federal income tax. (That amount is based on standard, itemized deductions of \$12,200 and personal exemptions of \$15,600.) "The smallest tax you will ever typically pay is

to your city government," Ross says. The current West U budget raises more property taxes than last year by more than \$415,033, about 2.63 percent. Of that amount, \$116,603 comes from new property added to the tax rolls last year.

The average West U property owner is expected to pay approximately \$85 more this year for city services. The \$16.3 million in city property taxes funds about 51 percent of the city's total debt and operating budgets. Charges for fees and services provide about 34 percent of the annual budget, with other taxes and fees raising the remainder of city revenues.

The lion's share of West U city expenditures – about \$11.9 million – is for personnel. Another \$9.34 million is spent on debt service; \$7.6 million for operating expenses; \$5.1 million for operating and capital transfers; and \$151,300 set aside for capital purchases.

As you traverse the surrounding areas you can certainly appreciate that our smallest tax burden provides the greatest impact in the outstanding quality of life which we enjoy in West U.

Friends of West U Parks

PARK LOVERS' BALL • FEBRUARY 8, 2014

The 23rd Park Lovers' Ball will be held at the Royal Sonesta Houston Hotel on Saturday evening, February 8th beginning at 7 p.m. Invitations will arrive in West U households in early January. Event Chairs Megan and Drew Morris, Nancy Kate and Mark Prescott, and Kara and Dax Sanders, along with Honorary Chair, Cece McCann, invite you to be part of this popular annual West U gala.

Seats are still available with table purchases starting at \$2500 for a table for 10 and individual seats are \$250. If you have not already made your reservations to attend, be sure to mail in the rsvp card or contact Friends Executive Director, Donna LaMond, at 713.662.7430 or DLaMond@WestUTX.gov, or visit www.westuparks.org. The evening will include a special \$50,000 check presentation to Friends by Direct Energy for their 2014 Corporate Sponsorship. There will be dinner and dancing to the tunes of the David Caceres Group, silent and live auctions, and big board. The ball always has a few surprises in store for guests as well. Auction highlights include safaris and other hunting trips, Texans Game Day package (four (4) 50-yard line club tickets, four (4) pregame sideline passes, and one (1) parking pass) for a regular season home game in 2014; a one (1) Week Getaway to Costa Rica, and a two (2) Night Stay in Rose Hill Cottage in Round Top during Spring 2014 Antique Week.

There will be something for everyone in the auction, from trips and sporting outings, to jewelry for that special someone, and everything in between. Show your love for West U Parks -- Gather friends and neighbors and put together a table for Park Lovers' Ball.



Park Lovers' Ball 2014 Co-chairs, Megan Morris, Kara Sanders, and Nancy Kate Prescott

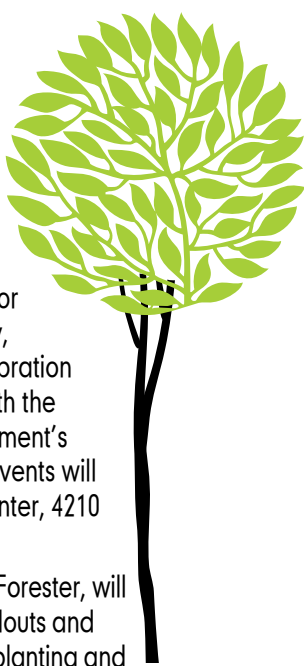


Friends fundraising continues year around with the stork program to announce the birth of a new baby, business and community partnerships, memorials and honorariums, pavers, benches, and tree sales. For more information, please visit www.westuparks.org, or call the Friends office at 713.662.7430.

2012-2013-2014 Friends Corporate Sponsor



ARBOR DAY Celebration



The City of West University Place will hold its annual Arbor Day Celebration on Saturday, April 12 at 9:00 a.m. The celebration will be held in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department's Easter Spring Festival. Both events will be held at the Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire Blvd.

Craig Koehl, West U's Urban Forester, will be on hand to distribute handouts and answer questions regarding planting and preservation of trees. Residents may pick up one complimentary tree per household.

West U sponsors the annual Arbor Day Celebration as part of our participation in the Tree City USA program, which is operated by the Arbor Day Foundation. The city has participated in the program and been awarded a Tree City USA designation for the past 24 years. West U achieves this designation because the city meets the four standards to become a Tree City USA community: have a tree board or department, a tree-care ordinance, a community forestry program with annual expenditures of at least \$2 per capita, and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

For additional information about the Easter Spring Festival, please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 713.662.7420 or visit www.westutx.gov/events.

For additional information about the Arbor Day Foundation, visit www.arborday.org. For additional information about Tree City USA, visit www.arborday.org/TreeCityUSA.

Park Quiet Hours

- **Weekdays (Mon – Fri), except holidays**
Before 7:00 am or after 8:00 pm
- **Saturdays, except holidays**
Before 8:00 am or after 8:00 pm
- **Sundays and on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the corresponding Friday or Monday on which the city observes that holiday**
Before 12 Noon or after 8:00 pm



& Parks & Recreation Events

Lifeguard Certification Courses

Are you 15 or older and looking for a great summer job, after school activity, or a challenging career in aquatics? Lifeguarding puts you in an exciting position, working as part of a team to help people safely enjoy the water. Lifeguarding will help you develop skills and experiences that will be valued by colleges and future employers. All participants must pass a pre-requisite skills swimming test prior to taking the class that will be administered the first day. Classes will be held on Saturday and Sunday on March 29 - April 6, April 26 - May 4, and again on May 10 - 18 from



8:00am – 5:00pm. The price will be \$200 for residents and \$225 for non-residents. For more information about this class please call the Recreation Center at 713.662.7420 or visit www.westutx.gov/reg.

Stingray and Barracuda swim lesson class durations extended!

Based on feedback from recent surveys, the Stingray and Barracuda class durations have been extended on a trial basis for the winter, spring, and summer seasons. Starting January 13 all Stingray classes will be 35 minutes long and all Barracuda classes will be 40 minutes long. The cost of the classes will also be slightly higher to allow for the extra class time. All class durations are subject to change for fall 2014. Please refer to pages 6 and 7 of the Winter/Spring 2014 Leisure Guide for class times and prices

Now Hiring

The West University Recreation Center and Colonial Park Pool staff is now accepting applications for part time seasonal recreation attendant, lifeguard, and swim instructor positions. The Parks & Recreation Department offers the most competitive rates, flexible schedules and fun atmosphere! Certifications are necessary for some positions and quality customer service is a must for all. Be a part of the team and join the movement to help West U stay ACTIVE! For more information visit www.westutx.gov/application or call a customer service representative at 713.662.7420.



Parks & Recreation Part-Timer Facts

We currently have employees that have been loyal to the West U community for 5, 10 and 20 years! Several college age employees on staff are pursuing careers in criminal justice, dental hygiene, marketing, communications and many other professions. Our high school age employees are in water polo, competitive swimming, and various academic and honor societies. The majority of our employees grew up in West U and participated in our facilities throughout their childhood. *We'd like to know you better too. Next time you are at the Recreation Center or Colonial Pool, stop by and chat with us!*

Summer Camps! Got Plans?

It's never too early to plan for summer sun and fun! Enroll your kids to the Parks & Recreation Department's innovative Summer Camps for all interests and ages.



Top 5 Camps of the Summer:

Tennis & More Sports Camp	iKids
Project Idea Labs	Kidventure
Building Brains	

A complete listing of summer camp descriptions, dates and times can be found on www.westutx.gov/camps. **Priority Registration** (for 2013 campers) begins on Tuesday, January 28 **Resident Registration** begins on Tuesday, February 4 **Non-Resident Registration** begins on Thursday, February 6 To register for Kidventure, please visit www.kidventure.com.

Winter/Spring 2014 Registration

Registration for programs offered during the Winter and Spring seasons continue at the West University Recreation Center. Don't miss the opportunity to be part of our countless programs!

-Infant Massage	-Family Yoga
-Infant Swimming Resource	-Preconception, Prenatal and Postnatal Group Fitness
-Once Upon a Time Dance Camp	-The Booty Barre®
-Preschool Sports	-Insanity
-Sideline Spirit! Cheerleading	-MELT Method Class
-Spanish for Kids	-Self-Care Sundays
-Yogiños: Yoga for Youth®	

A complete listing of classes, dates and times can be found on www.westutx.gov/parks.

Create Memories at Colonial Park Pool

Plan your next party or special event at Colonial Park Pool! The Parks & Recreation team is now accepting reservations during regular operating hours for private use of the Wooden Deck or Multi-Purpose Room and general pool admission for up to 60 guests. You'll also have the chance to book the best deal in town! Request exclusivity to the entire pool and amenities for a minimum of two hours! Exclusive use to the pool requires management approval so make sure to turn in your request today!

West U Needs Your input!

Park Master Planning Survey Coming Soon

Residents will be receiving a survey letter, containing a web link and access code, in the mail during the **week of January 13**. Please take a few minutes to assist the City of West University Place in gathering input that will guide short and long- range goals for the Parks and Recreation Department. Your responses will be aggregated with those of other respondents, so they

will remain confidential. Data collection and analysis will be conducted by Texas AgriLife Extension, an unbiased facilitator of this process. Your input is important to our community! If you do not receive the **survey letter in the mail by January 19**, please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at myparks@westutx.gov or 713.662.7420.



SPRING IS AROUND THE CORNER AND SO IS SPRING TRIMMING

Did You Know?

- * Care and maintenance of the trees in the City right-of-way is the responsibility of the property owner.
- * You may be held responsible for any damages caused by low hanging tree limbs and vegetation over the roadway and sidewalk.
- * You may be held responsible for vegetation knowingly obstructing a regulatory sign that results in an accident or damages.

Current Requirements for Clearance:

Tree Height Clearance Over Roadways

The City Code follows the National Fire Code which requires clearance of 13'-6" from curb to curb. Low hanging limbs over the roadway is dangerous to drivers and interfere with providing fast and effective City services for paramedic, fire, trash and recycling collection.

Not sure how high 13'-6" is? A good rule of thumb when



determining if you trees need to be trimmed - if your tree growth is below the height of the streetlights located along your street, then they need to be trimmed.

Sight Obstructions of Regulatory Signs

If there is a regulatory sign (stop, speed, school or park zone, etc.) located in front of your property, please keep

in mind that regular trimming is needed to ensure that vegetation does not obscure the sign for the motoring public. A good rule of thumb when deciding if vegetation needs to be trimmed – if you cannot see the full sign from 3 to 4 property lots away (approx. 150-200 feet), then the vegetation needs to be trimmed.



Before and after photos of a stop sign sight visibility obstruction.

Tree & Shrub Clearance and Sidewalks

Another issue that needs to be addressed annually and sometimes more frequently is the vegetation growing around sidewalks. The City Code and American with Disabilities Act requires a clearance height of 80 inches over the sidewalk and a minimum of 36" inches of clearance side to side.



Before and after photos of a sidewalk obstruction.

Help keep West U friendly for pedestrians and drivers by maintaining your trees and shrubs. If you have any questions, concerning road, sidewalk or sign clearance, please contact the West U Public Works Department at 713.662.5839.

Reducing the City's Yard Waste

PAST: Between 1990 and 2006, the City recycled yard waste by collecting it separately from the regular garbage collection and delivering it to a composting/mulch company. The City was one of the first in Texas to collect yard waste separately from trash and required the use of paper bags. This service was discontinued in May 2006 after the City's composter sold their property and no other composter was close enough to the City to allow for separate yard waste recycling.

PRESENT: City Staff estimates that approximately 1,500 tons per year of yard waste is being sent to the landfill with regular trash. (Based on a historical average of yard waste collected between 2000 and 2005 when the City was recycling yard waste.) Yard waste recycling is being considered again since a reputable composter opened a facility that is closer to the City, making separate collection and recycling of yard waste more feasible.

CURRENT COLLECTION SYSTEM (NO SEPARATE YARD WASTE):

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Garbage/Yard Waste Collection:						
Regular Trash & Yard Waste	6,904	6,737	6,776	6,897	6,539	7,059
Curbside Recycling:						
Subtotal Curbside:	1,979	2,012	1,860	2,535	2,053	2,045
TOTAL TONS						
(Trash, Yard Waste & Recycling)	8,883	8,749	8,636	9,432	8,593	9,104
Recycling/Diversion Rate:	22.3%	23.0%	21.5%	26.9%	23.9%	22.5%

This chart shows the City's garbage collection and curbside recycling numbers (in tons) from 2007 to 2012. The recycling/diversion rate is the percentage of material that the City diverts from landfills. This rate has remained relatively flat over the last 6 years at 24%, which is 10% below the national average. If green waste recycling was implemented today, the City's recycling/diversion rate would be one of the highest in the State.

FUTURE: The good news is that City Council will be reconsidering yard waste recycling and collection next summer during the annual Budget process. City Staff has estimated the cost per household to be approximately \$2 more per month to cover the cost of adding an additional truck and crew to collect yard waste separately. The opening of a closer facility by reputable composters will allow the City to restart a program that has the

capability of making West U a leader once again in recycling and reaffirming the motto "West U Recycles".

While the City considers restarting this program, you can do your part to help divert the amount of yard waste going to landfill by grasscycling, letting your grass clippings fall on the ground. In addition, considering composting some of your yard waste in a composting bin in your back yard. Remember to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle as much as you can.

WEST U PRIDE

When it comes to recycling, West U has a long tradition of being a leader and an innovator. Did you know that:

- In 1972, West U was the first City in Harris County to recycle (1 of 3 in the State of Texas),
- In 1973, West U was the first in the State to begin weekly collection of curbside recycling; and
- In 1990, West U was one of the first cities in the State to begin recycling yard waste with curbside weekly collection?

To receive e-mail alerts relating to Recycling and Solid Waste news in the City, you can go to www.westutx.gov and click on E-Notify Me.

FACTS ABOUT YARD WASTE:

- Yard waste is 100% recyclable and is full of nutrients that can be reused for compost or mulch to improve soils.
- Currently yard waste is approximately 25% of our trash.
- The City does not have its own landfill and has to negotiate with third parties for disposing trash and yard waste at a landfill.
- Landfills have a life expectancy and building new landfills is expensive.

2014 HEAVY TRASH DAYS!

Spring Event: April 26 7 am – 3 pm
Fall Event: October 25 7 am – 3 pm

This spring while organizing the garage and cleaning out the house, keep in mind that the City holds two Heavy Trash Days per year. While the name says Heavy Trash that is not all we take. Also accepted are usable household items for charities, such as, the Goodwill or Salvation Army, E-waste (computers, monitors, etc.) and mattresses. All of these items will be recycled. Please note this is for residents only and no business trash will be accepted.

Keep a lookout for the reminders as the day comes closer but if you would like to know more please visit www.westutx.gov/trash or email recycle@westutx.gov.

SAVE THE DAY WITH FREE SHREDDING IN 2014!

Spring Event: May 3 9 am – Noon
Fall Event: November 1 9 am – Noon

Have a lot of confidential papers and don't want to burn out your shredder well the City may have the solution for you. Twice a year the City holds the free shredding event for residents. There is a limit of 5 banker sized boxes and no business shredding. To learn more, visit www.westutx.gov/recycle.

City of West University Place
3800 University Boulevard
West University Place, Texas 77005

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City of West U Officials

City Council Members

Mayor Bob Fry
Mayor Pro-Tem Susan Sample
Ed Heathcott
Joan Johnson
Dick Yehle

City Manager

Michael Ross

General Information (713) 668-4441

City Website www.westutx.gov

*City Currents is a quarterly publication
and is printed on ♻ recycled paper.*



Now that the holidays are over, diets have begun and life starts as normally as it will get, the Finance Department wants to wish you a happy new year. Many of you are new to West U and we know you are going to love the neighborhood. We would like to remind you of some options that will make your life a little easier in the coming year.

Utility bills will include charges for at least water, sewer and solid waste monthly; they can also contain additional charges such as irrigation/pool meters, alarm permit/renewal, Direct Link,

special collection fees for solid waste and late fees. Longtime residents may still have multiple account numbers but most of our residents with multiple properties in West U now see all their properties on a single bill. Therefore, if you own two houses you would see two waters, two sewers and two solid waste charges as well as additional charges listed above.

Utility bills may be paid with cash, check, money order or credit card. We also accept bill pay from your personal banks. We offer two automatic payment options for those who want to schedule their payments. Single or recurring credit card payments are available through a third party company, accessible through our city website at www.westutx.gov and drafted approximately five days before the billing dues date. We also offer an automatic draft from your checking account; a voided check and completed application are required for this option which is done in-house on the billing due date.

For those who still write checks, please remember that most checks are now deposited electronically with banks. Our paper checks are electronically scanned and deposited with our bank on a daily basis. For your safety, please write your checks in black or blue ink so that the checks scan clearly; this ensures that your payment goes into your account. Checks can be mailed, brought to the counter or dropped in our drop box located behind the Municipal Building on Amherst. Please make sure you drop those payments into the brown West U box and not the post office depository. The drop box is checked at least once every business day and multiple times on the billing's due date.

If you have any questions about your utility billing or other charges on the statement, please do not hesitate to contact us at 713.662.5824 or 713.662.5826. We would also like to invite you to come into the office and meet the staff; we can all put names and faces together. For those who are new, welcome to West U! To all residents, Happy New Year and thank you for the opportunity to serve you!